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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Engender, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

Jobs for the boys and the girls? Women and girls' experience of segregation in learning and work in Scotland

1. Engender is a women's organization based in Scotland and working on a feminist, anti-sexist agenda. Our aim is to make visible the impact of sexism on women, men, children, society and our social, cultural, economic, and political development. We do this by making the causes and impact of women's inequality visible, promoting gender equality in policy and practice and increasing women's power and influence. Our policy priorities are women's poverty, violence against women and women's representation in decision-making.

2. Engender has organizational members, as well as a large number of individual members, and is Scotland's representative on the Joint Committee on Women of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which represents women from the United Kingdom on the European Women's Lobby.

3. Engender welcomes the focus of the Commission on the Status of Women on access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

4. From the beginning of the education pipeline, through to the labour market, girls in Scotland detach from participation in science and technology learning. Ninety per cent of students on higher education information and technology (IT) and engineering courses are male. This contributes to significant occupational segregation in sectors as diverse as energy, information technology, and manufacturing.

5. Scotland's labour market is characterized by occupational segregation, with six of every 10 women concentrated in just ten occupations. Women tend to work in those occupations that pay the least, and gender organizations frequently talk about the "Five Cs" of female-dominated work: cleaning, caring, catering, clerical, and cashiering (retail). The "crowding" of women into these undervalued occupations contributes to women's poverty.

Indicators of segregation

6. Scotland currently has a gender pay gap of 12 per cent, if the hourly pay of full-time women is compared to that of men. For part-time women the gap is significantly larger, with the hourly pay 32 per cent less of that of full-time men. Occupational segregation is a key cause of the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap in science, engineering and technology (SET) associate professions at 13 per cent is larger than the median national pay gap of 12 per cent, and the gap increased between 2008 and 2009 for both SET associate professions and skilled metal and electrical trades.

7. The Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SRC), identify that over 70 per cent of women who have studied SET do not work in SET occupations.

* Issued without formal editing.

8. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme, which is one of the key entry points to the labour market for young people who do not attend college or university, is heavily segregated, and is itself at risk of further entrenching segregation. Fewer than one per cent of plumbing and construction apprentices, and fewer than three per cent of engineering apprentices are female. Fewer than two per cent of childcare apprentices are male.

The Scottish context

9. The Scottish government, as a devolved administration of the United Kingdom, has obligations to deliver on the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (ICESCR).

10. Although welfare benefits and employment law are not devolved to Scotland under the devolution settlement, but are instead reserved to Westminster, Scotland is responsible for policy and delivery in education and training, in employability activity, and in regulating the public sector.

11. Key levers of change, like *Curriculum for Excellence*, which mandates the content and delivery of learning in schools, and the National Training Programmes, which involve over £50m of public expenditure on vocational learning, are within the grasp of the Scottish government.

12. The government's *Economic Strategy*, the key policy document of the administration, identifies occupational sectors that are of particular significance to Scotland's economy. The majority of these, including energy (with a special focus on renewables), bioscience, tourism, and food and drink, operate within gender segregated labour markets.

Scottish activity on occupational segregation

13. Since Beijing, there have been programmes of activity across Scotland, and the United Kingdom, to tackle occupational segregation and to promote women's engagement with science and technology. These include:

- the establishment of SRC, which works to support women students in SET subjects, women working or returning to SET, and SET employers;
- the Close the Gap initiative, which works with employers, policymakers, sectoral representative bodies, and trade unions to tackle all of the causes of the pay gap, including occupational segregation;
- the Scottish government's cross-directorate occupational segregation working group, which was established in response to a formal investigation by the Equal Opportunities Commission into occupational segregation in the Modern Apprenticeship programme;
- the United Kingdom Women and Work Commission, which was established in 2005 by Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to identify solutions to the causes of the gender pay gap, and whose recommendations were implemented by the Scottish government (then Scottish Executive);
- the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, which formed part of the Equality Act (2006), and which places a proactive obligation on public sector

bodies to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and promote equality, in their functions as employers, and as service providers (now being replaced by a single equality duty on the public sector as part of the Equality Act (2010));

- the identification of occupational segregation as a priority for Scottish Ministers, as part of the Scottish government's own specific obligations as part of the Gender Equality Duty;
- employability initiatives, like Women@Work, and Women Onto Work, incorporating a supply-side approach to tackling occupational segregation into their work;
- the Scottish Women's Budget Group, which campaigns for a gender budget analysis of the Scottish Budget, has consistently challenged the lack of a gendered approach to the development and delivery of national training programmes, and pay modernization processes;
- Girl Geeks is an interdisciplinary forum for women with a professional interest in technology; and
- private sector organizations, like Cisco Systems and JP Morgan, have developed their own initiatives to engage with girls, as part of corporate social responsibility agendas.

An agenda at risk?

14. It is self-evident that Scotland has made structural gains since the Beijing Platform for Action. The Gender Equality Duty has had the potential to be a lever of change, and to drive practice across the public sector, including within the Scottish government, and within the private sector, via public sector procurement.

15. However, after only two years, it was proposed by the Government of the United Kingdom that the Gender Equality Duty, along with similar duties in respect of race and disability, be replaced by a single duty, which would also include the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, religion and belief, age, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. While the expansion of protection is to be welcomed, the proposals for the new duty are less clear about the obligations that it will place on public sector bodies, and it is likely that the new duty will be a less effective lever for gender equality.

16. It is also the case that much of the activity around occupational segregation is being delivered by projects and initiatives receiving short-term packages of funding. Despite the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty, there has been no sustained Government activity around occupational segregation that has delivered significant change.

17. Gender mainstreaming is not evident in many of the government departments and non-departmental public bodies responsible for the education, skills, and economic development agendas in Scotland. All have a notional commitment to equality, but this is frequently contained within structures, like equality teams, that are themselves at risk of restructure.

18. As public budgets in the United Kingdom, and consequently Scotland, come under pressure, there is a real risk that marginal projects and functions will have their funding reduced or cut. This is particularly likely to happen in the absence of a

gender budget analysis of the Scottish Budget, and in the absence of a robust public sector duty.

19. **Recommendations for Scotland**:

- A national strategy, lead by a Scottish Minister, for tackling occupational segregation, which would include education and skills, employment, and economic development activity.
- Implementing a robust single equality duty, with clear requirements on public sector bodies to conduct gender impact assessment on all significant policies, including procurement, and to identify robust gender objectives.
- Adequate resourcing and development of existing initiatives which have demonstrated expertise in tackling occupational segregation in general and specifically in the SET sector.
- Visibility for outcomes around women's labour market participation and occupational segregation within national planning frameworks, including the existing National Performance Framework.

20. **Recommendation for the United Kingdom**:

- Appointment of a "Gender and SET" government champion at ministerial level to drive a cross governmental and integrated strategy to tackle gender segregation in education, workforce and science policy.